/Pages i-iv are title pages./

/v/ Foreword

101 I wrote this book in collaboration with the tribes of the west-
114 ern Haut-Atlas /High Atlas/, and particularly the Seksawa.
Nothing is more fierce, better preserved than these sons of the
824 black schist. The dizzy slope that goes up to one of their high
places, the Tichka, bears an isolated tree that they call tasghart
[856] wawal, something like "the tree of speech." They administer
122 its leaves in an infusion to children slow to speak. I have spent
a good deal of time myself in unraveling the language of the
Seksawa.

123 Abandoning the doubtful method of the "informant" and of
124 questionnaires, I would let the problems and the facts come to
me. A year passed before I reached the level of the accounts
composed, around 1925, at Imintanout by Lieutenant de La
Chapelle. I collected the best of my provender almost by chance,
by means of visits in the mountains, long talks on the roads, judi-
cial debates, festivals, evenings. Thus friendships and knowledge
deepened simultaneously.

I had the joy of sharing the one as well as the other with
many visitors. They will recognize themselves here. Perhaps
they will conjure up, in reading such and such a page, that brief
and shining hour, the irreplaceable bit of life that momentarily
united us in the history of the Atlas.

128 This book, therefore, was written in communication. Al-
though it does not claim the authority of any of those who have
read it in manuscript, by pieces or in its totality, it has greatly
benefited from their remarks. All were valuable to it. But I
could not say whether it has always profited from them as much
as it should have. I can therefore neither hierarchize the grati-
tude nor have understood by it that I am acting on the authority
of such and such of the masters who have expressly wished to ad-
vise me. The imperfections of my work will be alone, alas, to
face the too-just criticism. I do, however, acknowledge my debt
to MM. G. Davy, L. Gernet, R. Montagne, /vi/ J. Célérier,

/vi cont./

128 J. Dresch, F. Braudel, L. Milliot, H. Terrasse, E. Lévi-Provençal, J. Despois, E. Laoust, J. Orieux, G. H. Bousquet, A. Adam. The Institut des Hautes Études marocaines /Institute of Moroccan Advanced-Studies/ has given me most substantial aid. M. L. [122] Galand checked the Berbère /Berber/ writing, lessons in which, by M. A. Basset, had given me a presentiment as to its exacting niceties. I am indebted to Lucie Berque for her drawings, to M. Leloup for his cartography, to M. J. Van den Hove for his careful proofreading. To all, thanks. And thanks to all my collaborators from Imintanout, great and small, French and Moroccan, who participated in the research or in working it up. Many names crowd under my pen here, names which I cannot mention for lack of space and which I must leave in the anonymity of friendship.

123 Most of all, it is to the Seksawa that my gratitude goes. Mixing in their life for several years, I advanced slowly into their acquaintance, and perhaps into their confidence. Of course, I have not been to the end of the one or the other. In order to go further, it would have required a still longer stay and, to speak truthfully, a definitive naturalization, similar to that which, in the course of the centuries, brought so many distant sons to the little people of Lalla Aziza.

000 All was rightly so. As great as its ambitions were, analysis stops before intimacies which it could not infringe upon and which will be revealed only when they can be, when they need to be, if there is still time for it. The future in the Atlas, as elsewhere, will perhaps make the silent speak. We shall leave to it the task of completing our research, if it is worth the trouble, on the day when the Seksawa have tasted of the tree of speech.

Cairo, October 1, 1954.

/xii cont./

121 that struck his mind, death of holy personages, passage of the
[127] Sultan's armies, struggles of villages or cantons.

So it is by direct inquiry, made in the country, that one
114 must ask what the texts deny us. It is therefore necessary to
• 123 try, in the course of long visits in the villages of the Atlas, to
[122] adopt the existence of the Berbères /Berbers/ for a time by a kind of voluntary mimicry; by speaking their language, one will even try to take on their habits of thought, in order to lessen the distance that separates us from their primitive civilization and to get to observe it better.

Moreover, this method of investigation does not proceed without serious difficulties; it imposes, perhaps still more than the use of documents, a rigorous discipline.

Indeed, one cannot ask the Berbères /Berbers/ -- even when we have gained their confidence at the cost of some effort -- to initiate us into all that we do not know about them; it does not occur to them that we may not know what is most obvious to them and most strange to us; this is how it happened that we spent several months in the western Haut-Atlas /High Atlas/ studying the life of the tribes without discovering the existence of the "leffs," that organization of permanent alliances without which, however, it is impossible to understand the transformation that has taken place in the country in the past fifty years; only the chance occurrence of a historical inquiry made with the oldest old men of a village abruptly revealed to us their nature and essential role. Rather /xiii/ than by confidences, it is thus by an attentive observation of the present, by meticulous research on the events of the past -- such as the oldest witnesses can enable us to know -- that one will come to understand the nature of the institutions and to discern the working of the laws that dominate the politics of the tribes.

121 On the other hand, each of the cantons in which the inhabitants of the Moroccan South voluntarily enclose their activity has its own life; particularly in the mountains, the horizon of the political life of these small republics is strictly limited; it will